294
438 With the closing of the stills in Comitan came a second economic pressure which sharply changed the Aguacatenangueros' pattern of travel. The trade specialty which Aguacatenango had intensively developed, at least by 1920 and perhaps long before, was the weaving of palm hats. A principal point of trade for these hats was Comitan where the Aguacatenangueros took them.

294 With the advent of the Pan-American highway, the region was
438 flooded with nationally manufactured sombreros, which, in the
434 period of ten years completely destroyed the Aguacatenango mar-
438 ket. As the marketability of palm hats decreased, the Agua-
439
*273 catenangueros stopped going to Comitan; and it was during this same time that the supply of comiteco was cut off.

432 The people from Aguacatenango then began to buy their
438 aguardiente from licensed sellers in Pinola (Villa las Rosas)
*273 and Teopisca as well as from clandestine sources, the nearest being in Amatenango and the mountainous area that lay between
548 there and Chanal. The use of clandestine aguardiente was still
• 687 restricted by the occasional inspection by patrols of soldiers and liquor inspectors who would examine the contents of the houses in Aguacatenango, confiscating the aguardiente for which one did not have a legitimate receipt and taking the holders of such to jail in San Bartolomé de los Llanos. By the end of the 40's, distillation technology had disseminated widely enough among the Indian municipios that a few men in Aguacatenango began

548 distilling aguardiente. Distillation of aguardiente continued
• 687 for a relatively short time (perhaps as long as three to four years) because satisfactory arrangements could not be worked out within the community so that the distillers would not be denounced to the authorities by their neighbors. Unlike Amatenango, where the clandestine distillation of aguardiente continues to the present time, inspectors were able to discover and destroy the four or five stills operated by the men of Aguacatenango. The punishments meted out to the owners were relatively severe, some having to spend as long as a year in jail and having to pay as much as 1000 pesos to secure their release.

273* The pattern of procurement of aguardiente has changed
[198] substantially in Aguacatenango since the time we began doing
[432] field work there. In 1957, when we were first there, the buying of aguardiente was both situation-and-family-specific. Most of the aguardiente was being bought in Pinola and later in Teopisca and had to be carried on one's back to Aguacatenango. In an-
[796] ticipation of each fiesta or other occasion where it was known drinking would take place, each family would bring in three or four liters for that occasion. Beyond this family supply, there was relatively little aguardiente in the community. It was not at all unusual, after a fiesta, to see men inquiring all over town about the possibility of buying, or borrowing, a liter of